

(FROM THE TIMES, JANUARY 22ND, 27TH, 29TH, AND FEBRUARY 1ST, 1900.)

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND DR. ST. GEORGE MIVART.

77, Inverness-terrace, W., Jan. 6, 1900.

My dear Lord Cardinal,—Although I believe the *Tablet* belongs to your Eminence, I am fully persuaded that you could not have known and approved of the monstrous article on me which appears therein.

I should not think of complaining of any criticism of opinions referred to by me, however hostile; but when I am personally abused as a liar, a calumniator, and a coward, I feel I have cause to complain. I have never before been accused of cowardice in making my views known, but rather of too much boldness and presumption.

The article will surely shock all earnest Christians, for it sins deeply against that greatest of Christian virtues—charity. Its author represents me as falsely citing anonymous witnesses. I give you my honour I do not refer to one save with complete truthfulness.

As to the points he specially refers to, the persons I cite are well known to your Eminence. As to the birth of our Lord, I did not merely hear, but had written evidence, a verbatim copy of which is now in my library. As to the resurrection, my informant was almost as much known to your Eminence as Bishop Brindle. He did not bind me to secrecy, and if your Eminence cares to know who he was and will keep his name a secret, I will mention it.

The articles were written by me under a sense of duty, thinking death not far off, and (like my antecedent ones) with a view of opening as widely as possible the gates of Catholicity; the *Fortnightly* one to make conformity as easy as might be, the *Nineteenth Century* one to point out changes tending to facilitate that conformity—changes the existence and importance of many of which it is absolutely impossible to deny. My aim may have been Quixotic, my measures unwisely selected; but, whatever criticism I may merit, I am sure that scurrilous personalities can never be approved by your Eminence.

With unchanged sentiments of regard,

I remain as respectfully as affectionately yours,

ST. GEORGE MIVART.

Archbishop's House, Westminster, S.W., Jan. 9, 1900.

Dear Dr. Mivart,—I have received your letter, in which you complain of comments made upon your conduct by one of the Catholic papers, while you assure me that the articles in the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Fortnightly Review* were written by you “under a sense of duty, thinking death not far off.”

Before touching on these points, it is necessary to be clear as to the substance of your position.

You have publicly impugned the most sacred and fundamental doctrines of the faith, while still professing yourself to be a Catholic. It becomes, therefore, my primary duty, as Guardian of the Faith, to ascertain whether I am still to treat you as a member of the

Church and subject to my jurisdiction or to consider you outside the unity of the faith.

As a test of orthodoxy regarding certain doctrines dealt with by you in your articles in the *Nineteenth Century*, I herewith send you a Profession of Catholic Faith. I invite you to read and return it to me subscribed by your signature. Nothing less than this will be satisfactory. I need not say how deeply I regret the necessity which compels me to take official action of this kind, and how earnestly I hope and pray that you may have light and grace to withdraw from the position in which you stand, and to submit yourself unreservedly to the authority of the Catholic Church.

Believe me to be, yours faithfully,

HERBERT CARD. VAUGHAN,
Archbishop of Westminster.

FORMULA.

I hereby declare that, recognizing the Catholic Church to be the supreme and infallible guardian of the Christian faith, I submit therein my judgment to hers, believing all that she teaches, and condemning all that she condemns. And in particular I firmly believe and profess that Our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, in the fulness of time, for us men and for our salvation, came down from Heaven and was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary—that is to say, that the same Jesus Christ had no man for His Father, and that St. Joseph was not His real or natural father; but only His reputed or foster father.

I therefore firmly believe and profess that the Blessed Virgin Mary conceived and brought forth the Son of God in an ineffable manner by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and absolutely without loss or detriment to her Virginity, and that she is really and in truth, as the Catholic Church most rightly calls her, the “Ever Virgin”; that is to say, Virgin before the birth of Christ, Virgin in that birth, and Virgin after it, her sacred and spotless Virginity being perpetually preserved from the beginning, then, and for ever afterwards.

I therefore condemn and reject as false and heretical the assertion that doubt or denial of the Virgin Birth of Christ or the perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, is—or at any future time ever can be in any sense whatever—consistent with the Holy Catholic faith. (Cf. Nicene and Apostles' Creed and Constitution of Paul IV., “Cum Querundam,” and Clement VIII., “Dominici Gregis.”)

I believe and profess that our Lord Jesus Christ, after His death and burial, rose again from the dead, and that His Body glorified in His Resurrection is the same as that in which He suffered and died for us upon the Cross. I reject and condemn the statement that the Body of Christ rotted in the grave or suffered corruption as false and heretical, and contrary to the Holy Catholic faith now and in all future time.

I firmly believe and profess in accordance with the Holy Council of Trent that the first man Adam, when he transgressed the command of God in Paradise, immediately lost the holiness and justice in which he had been constituted, and that he incurred through that prevarication the wrath and indignation of God, and that this prevarication of Adam injured, not himself

alone, but his posterity, and that by it the holiness and justice received from God were lost by him, not for himself alone, but for us all. (Cf. Council of Trent, Session V.)

I firmly believe and profess that our Lord died upon the cross, not merely (as Socinus held) to set us an example or an "object-lesson" of fidelity unto death, but that He might give Himself "a redemption for all" by "bearing our sins in His body upon the tree"—that is, by making a true and full satisfaction to the offended justice of God for the sins original and actual of all men, and that these sins are taken away by no other remedy than the merit of the "one mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 5), who has reconciled us to God in His own blood; "made unto us justice, sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30. Cf. Council of Trent, Session V.)

I reject and condemn all doctrines which deny the reality and transmission of original sin, and the perfect sufficiency of the atonement by which man is reconciled to God in the blood of Jesus Christ, as false and heretical, and contrary to the Holy Catholic faith now and at all future time.

I firmly believe and profess that the souls of men after death will be judged by God, and that those who are saved will "go into everlasting life" (Matt. xxv. 46), and those who are condemned "into everlasting punishment." I reject as false and heretical all doctrines which teach that the souls in Hell may eventually be saved, or that their state in Hell may be one which is not of punishment. (Cf. Constitution of Council of Lateran IV.)

In accordance with the Holy Councils of Trent and of the Vatican, I receive all the books of the Old and New Testament with all their parts as set forth in the fourth session of the Council of Trent, and contained in the ancient Latin edition of the Vulgate, as sacred and canonical, and I firmly believe and profess that the said Scriptures are sacred and canonical—not because, having been carefully composed by mere human industry, they were afterwards approved by the Church's authority, nor merely because they contain revelation with no admixture of error; but because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author, and have been delivered as such to the Church herself. Wherefore, in all matters of faith or morals appertaining to the building up of Christian doctrine, I believe that to be the true sense of Holy Scripture which our Holy Mother the Church has held and now holds, to whom the judgment of the true sense and interpretation of Holy Scripture belongs. (Cf. Council of Trent, Session IV.; Council of the Vatican, Dogmatic Constitution of the Catholic Faith, chap. ii., can. ii.)

I firmly believe and profess that the doctrine of faith which God has revealed has not been proposed like a philosophical invention to be perfected by human ingenuity, but has been delivered as a Divine deposit to the spouse of Christ, to be faithfully kept and infallibly declared, and that therefore that meaning of the sacred dogmas is to be perpetually retained which our Holy Mother the Church has once declared, and that that meaning can never be departed from, under the pretence or pretext of a deeper comprehension of them. I reject as false and heretical the assertion that it is possible at some time, according to the progress of science, to give to doctrines proclaimed by the Church a sense different from that which the Church has understood and understands, and consequently that the sense and meaning of her doctrines can ever be in the course of time practically explained away or reversed. (Cf. Dogmatic Constitution of the Vatican on Catholic Faith, chap. iv., can. iv.)

Moreover, I condemn and revoke all other words and statements which in articles contributed by me to the *Fortnightly Review* and the *Nineteenth Century*, or in any other of my writings, are found to be in matter of faith or morals contrary to the teaching of the Holy Catholic Faith according to the determination of the Apostolic See; and in all such matters I submit myself to the judgment of the said See, receiving all that it receives and condemning all that it condemns.

January 11, 1900.

Dear Lord Cardinal,—I have received your Eminence's letter, enclosing a document you invite me to sign and return. Before I can do that, however, there is a previous question; as "grace supposes nature," so before I am a Catholic I am an English gentleman, and in that capacity I have been grossly outraged.

Granting, for argument's sake, I have impugned certain doctrines (which I deny), that gives no man the right to assault or insult me at his pleasure.

The foul, vulgar, and brutal personalities of the *Tablet*, charging me with cowardice and wilful, calumnious mendacity, are such that no man with a particle of self-respect could tolerate.

Before anything, therefore, I must ask for reparation, and I ask it of your Eminence, not as a cardinal or a priest, or even as a Christian, but simply in your character of a distinguished English gentleman, desiring to act rightly and with the courtesy befitting that character. I ask, then, for reparation in one of the following modes:—

(1) A letter from yourself reproaching, and expressing your regret for, the abusive utterances of your journal in my regard; or

(2) The publication in the *Tablet* of a complete withdrawal and full apology for its imputations against my courage, veracity, and straightforwardness; or

(3) A letter from the writer of the article with rawing his charges against me as a man, and begging my pardon.

I note with surprise that, in the letters I have received, your Eminence does not appear to recognize your responsibility for the utterances of your journal the *Tablet*.

For my part I, of course, fully recognize and respect your Eminence's ecclesiastical position with its rights and duties; but I recognize the right of no man to insult me (himself or through his subordinates), by personal imputations which relate, not to matters of belief, but to my natural qualities and characteristics.

Believe me, yours faithfully,

ST. G. MIVART.

To his Eminence Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster, &c.

Archbishop's House, Westminster, S.W., Jan. 12, 1900.

Dear Dr. Mivart,—I have received your note of yesterday's date. I have only two things to say in reply to it.

First, if you have any personal correction to make in the criticism of your article by the *Tablet*, you are free, like any other author whose publication is under review, to address yourself to the editor.

I know not by what privilege or usage you address yourself to me instead. Kindly go to the proper quarter.

Secondly, my own duty towards the Church and your assertion, while professing yourself to be a member thereof, that good and devoted Catholics hold certain blasphemous and heretical doctrines, and that these doctrines may become some day generally held within the Church, are matters of too great an import to allow of their being put aside by references to journalistic criticism or to any other side issues.

Your assertion is equivalent to saying that a person may be actually a Catholic and yet a disbeliever in the Incarnation and the Resurrection, and that the Church herself may change her belief in these doctrines.

A mere disclaimer of personally holding such heresies in general, and a mere general profession of adherence to Catholicity, such as is contained in your letter to *The Times* of to-day, is not sufficient to repair the scandal or to acquit you of complicity in the promotion of such heresies.

You tell me that your object has been "to open as widely as possible the gates of Catholicity" and "to make conformity as easy as might be."

This renders it all the more necessary that I should ask you to sign the formula of Catholic Faith, which I sent to you on Tuesday. As you are aware, no one can reject the profession of faith contained therein and still be a member of the Catholic Church. I ask you, therefore, to sign, having regard to your own honour and position as a Catholic as well as to the interest of souls committed to my care.

Believe me to be, your faithful and devoted servant,

HERBERT CARD. VAUGHAN,
Archbishop of Westminster.

January 14, 1900.

Dear Lord Cardinal,—I thank your Eminence for your letter of January 12. In reply, permit me to say I claim no "privilege," save that of old and valued friendship, in addressing you directly with respect to the *Tablet's* insults. It would be useless for me to address my friend Mr. Snead Cox. He must, of course, give insertion to whatever is authoritatively sent him from "Archbishop's House," and would do the same were it an apology. I make no objection to criticism of my writings; what I object to is the imputation to me of defects as to ordinary courage and honesty.

I repeat that my appeal is to your Eminence both as proprietor of the *Tablet* and as a gentleman as regards family and sentiment. I so appeal because (since "*qui facit per alium facit per se*") you have, through your subordinates, imputed to me calumnious mendacity and cowardice. I must confess myself amazed and somewhat scandalized that your Eminence does not seem anxious at once to step forward and do me right (in a small matter so easily effected) as a matter of ordinary ethics, quite apart from religion. If the latter is to be brought into account, has not your Eminence (of course, unwittingly) broken the Commandment—"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour"?

Reluctantly, and with the greatest respect, I feel then compelled once more to demand an apology in one of the three modes pointed out in my last letter—namely (1) a letter from your Eminence; (2) an apology for and withdrawal of personal imputations in the next issue of the *Tablet*, or (3) a letter from the writer of the article asking my pardon and withdrawing his insults.

Before receiving such apology I can do nothing more in this matter, anxious as I am to meet your Eminence's wishes to the full extent of my power. I ask you, then, to kindly remove the cause which paralyses me. What would be the good of my signing anything if I am to remain branded by your organ, and therefore by your Eminence, as a coward and a liar? Evidently it would be said that I have signed insincerely and through fear! But if I am astonished at the seeming want of ethical perception as to the moral necessity for undoing a personal wrong, I am, if possible, still more amazed to find that your Eminence can never have read the articles you condemn. How otherwise could you write as you do about the doctrines of the Incarnation and Resurrec-

tion? I have not written one word about the latter doctrine, or about the fact of the Resurrection; I have only put forward a notion (propounded to me by the best theologian I ever knew) respecting its mode and nature.

To the doctrine of the Incarnation I have not referred, even in the most distant manner.

As a theologian, your Eminence of course knows, far better than I do, that God could have become incarnate as perfectly in a normal human embryo as in an abnormal one.

Indeed, I think some scholastics have (amongst their various subtleties) taught that God, did He so will, could become incarnate in a mere animal or in an onion. For my part I do not see how it is possible for the human intellect to set bounds to the possibilities of the *absoluta potestas* of the Almighty with respect to matters so utterly inconceivable. The things which have been written about my articles really remind me of the attack made by Kingsley on Cardinal Newman.

As to much I am saddled with, I can say truly, as Newman did, "I never said it." If your Eminence could only spare time to read my articles carefully, you would see that I have scrupulously abstained from putting forward my own unimportant notions, and have strictly confined myself to making statements as to matters of fact which I believe to be incontrovertible.

I remain, dear Lord Cardinal, your Eminence's most faithful and devoted servant,

ST. G. MIVART.

Archbishop's House, Westminster, S.W., Jan. 16, 1900.

Dear Dr. Mivart,—I regret that I must call upon you a third and last time to forward to me, with your signature attached thereto, the form of profession of faith, which as your Bishop I felt bound to send to you in consequence of the articles published by you in the *Nineteenth Century* and *Fortnightly Review*. And at the same time I require you to express your reprobation of those articles and your sincere sorrow for having published them.

I cannot allow you to evade this duty on the ground of anything that may have been written in the *Tablet*. If you have a grievance against the *Tablet*, you must go to the editor. I am responsible neither for its language nor its arguments.

My dealing with you is exclusively as your ordinary and as guardian of the faith of my flock.

Failing dutiful submission on your part, the law of the Church will take its course.

Believe me, your faithful and devoted servant.

HERBERT CARD. VAUGHAN, Archbishop
of Westminster.

January 19, 1900.

Dear Lord Cardinal,—I regret that illness has, till now, hindered my replying to your Eminence's last letter.

Therein you say you are "dealing" with me "exclusively" as my "ordinary." It is also in that character only that I write to you to-day, putting aside for the moment the question of apology which I cannot doubt your sense of right will be sure, in some form, to secure for me. The fact is I am exceedingly anxious to meet your Eminence's wishes and to give all the satisfaction I can to my Catholic friends. I remain attached to Catholicity and its rites, at which, happen

what may, I shall not cease to assist, for I consider Divine worship (in the words of my friend Dr. Gasquet) "the highest privilege of a rational nature." To your Eminence, then, as my ordinary, I confidently appeal to help me out of a difficulty and to resolve a point of conscience which troubles me.

When I was admitted as a Catholic I made, of course, a profession of the creed of Pope Pius IV. But I have no recollection of ever having made, or been asked to make, the following profession which forms part of the document I am now asked to sign :—

"In accordance with the Holy Councils of Trent and of the Vatican, I receive all the books of the Old and New Testament with all their parts as set forth in the fourth section of the Council of Trent and contained in the ancient Latin edition of the Vulgate, as sacred and canonical, and I firmly believe and confess that the said Scriptures are sacred and canonical—not because, having been carefully composed by mere human industry, they are afterwards approved by the Church's authority, not merely because they contain revelation with no mixture of error, but because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author, and have been delivered as such to the Church herself."

Now, I beg of your Eminence, as my ecclesiastical superior, to tell me whether I am, or not, right as to what would be the consequences of my signing the above ?

It would be easy, of course, by a little dexterity, to distort and evade what appears to be its real and obvious meaning. As God is the First Cause and Creator of all things, He is, in that sense, their author. Author of the Deameron of Boccaccio, as well as of the Bible. But to make a profession with such a meaning would be, in my eyes, grossly profane and altogether unjustifiable.

Your Eminence, of course, means and wishes me to sign *ex animo* the document sent to me, and I, for my part, desire to be perfectly—transparently—honest, candid, and straightforward.

Now in my judgment an acceptance and profession of the above cited portion of the document sent me would be equivalent to an assertion that there are no errors, or altogether false statements, or fabulous narratives, in the Old and New Testament, and that I should not be free to hold and teach, without blame, that the world was not created in any six periods of time ; that the story of the serpent and the tree is altogether false ; that the history of the tower of Babel is a mere fiction devoid of any particle of truth ; that the story of Noah's Ark is also quite erroneous, as again that of the plagues of Egypt ; that neither Joshua nor Hezekiah interfered with the regularity of solar time ; that Jonah did not live within the belly of any kind of marine animal ; that Lot's wife was never turned into a pillar of salt ; that Palam's ass never spoke. I only put these forward as a few examples of statements (denials) which it seems to me any one who holds that "the books of the Old and New Testament, with all their parts, were written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and have God for their author" ought not and could not logically or rationally make.

If, however, your Eminence can authoritatively tell me that Divine inspiration or authorship does not (clerical errors, faults of translation, &c., apart) guarantee the truth and inerrancy of the statements so inspired, it will in one sense be a great relief to my mind and greatly facilitate the signing of the document,

your Eminence's decision on the subject being once publicly known, and also the conditions under which I sign it.

I therefore most earnestly adjure and entreat your Eminence to afford me all the spiritual help and enlightenment you can ; for the question I now ask is my one great trouble and difficulty. I cannot and will not be false to science any more than to religion.

If only your Eminence can tell me I have judged wrongly, and that I shall be held free and deemed blameless for denying the truth of statements whereof the Council of Vatican has declared God to be the Author, it will afford my conscience great and much-needed relief.

I trust I may receive an answer on Tuesday next at the latest. I feel it is possible, however, that, as your Eminence has so far declined to apologize, you may not accord me the authoritative answer to the question I so earnestly address to you as my ordinary. In that case I shall (according to custom) take silence to mean consent, and deem you think me right and agree with me in judging that no one who accepts the decrees of Trent and the Vatican (and Leo XIII.) about Scripture is free to proclaim the entire falsehood of any of its statements or professed histories.

I have the honour to remain, dear Lord Cardinal, your Eminence's most obedient and devoted servant,

ST. GEORGE MIVART.

Archbishop's House, Westminster, S.W., Jan. 21, 1900.

Dear Dr. Mivart,—I am sorry to hear that you have been ill, and sincerely hope that you are recovering. In reply to your letter of the 19th, let me first of all urge you to place your feet down upon the firm and fundamental principle which is the ground on which every true Catholic stands—viz., that the Church, being the Divine teacher established by Christ in the world, rightly claims from her disciples a hearty and intellectual acceptance of all that she authoritatively teaches. This principle, given us by Our Lord, will carry you safely over all objections and difficulties that may spring up along your path. It was applied by St. Augustine to his acceptance of the Scriptures, where he says :—"Ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me Catholice Ecclesie commoveret auctoritas."

But if you are going to give the assent of faith only to such doctrines as present no difficulties beyond the power of your finite intelligence to see through and solve by direct answer, you must put aside at once all the mysteries of faith and you must frankly own yourself to be a rationalist pure and simple. You then constitute your own ability to solve difficulties, intellectual or scientific, into your test of the doctrines proffered for your acceptance.

This is to return to the old Protestant system of private judgment, or to open rationalism and unbelief.

But you will let me, I hope, be frank and urge that it is your moral rather than your intellectual nature that needs attention. God gives this grace to the humble : it is "the clean of heart" who "shall see God." Let me press upon you the primary necessity of humility and persevering prayer for light and grace.

Having said this much in general, I now refer more directly to your questions as to Holy Scripture. For an authoritative recent statement see Leo XIII.'s Encyclical on Holy Scripture.

I would also recommend you to study Franzelin's *Treatise de S. Scriptura*, Hummelauer's *Commentaries*, and his account of the Creation. See III. Vol. of *Biblische Studien*, 1898, Friburg in Brigau, or his *Récit de la Création*.

But, perhaps, more useful to you than this would be a conversation with Rev. Dr. Clarke or with F. Tyrrell, S.J., both of whom would be able to understand your state of mind and to give you counsel and assistance. I refer you to them.

Believe me to be your faithful and devoted servant,

HERBERT CARD. VAUGHAN,

Archbishop of Westminster.

January 23.

Dear Lord Cardinal,—I thank you. I rejoice to say I am better. My "ordinary" has indeed acted promptly in the character of an authoritative prelate, and hardly with the patient pastoral consideration some persons expected. You have issued your "inhibition" without waiting for a reply to your third summons. Your last letter is, however, less "dogmatic" than could have been wished, seeing that, though Cardinal Archbishop and head not only of the diocese but of the province of Westminster, you say neither "yes" nor "no" to my very simple question. You refer me to two of your clergy, to Franzelin and to Leo XIII., for an answer. To Pope Leo I will go.

As to what you say about "private judgment," all of us, however submissive to authority, must, in the last resort, rest upon the judgment of our individual reason. How otherwise could we know that authority had spoken at all or what it had said?

It is impossible to accept anything as true which is a contradiction in terms. Upon that truth all theological reasoning is based and all other reasoning also.

I greatly desire to state plainly and to make your Eminence clearly understand what my religious position is and what it has for some years been. As you well know, I was once an ardent advocate for Catholicism. The best years of my life have been spent in its defence, while all I said in its favour I most thoroughly meant. Though, like many others who have thought much on such subjects, I have occasionally passed through periods of doubt, yet for years I was, on the whole, happy and full of confidence in the position I had taken up, which was clearly expressed in my article, "The Catholic Church and Biblical Criticism," published in the *Nineteenth Century* for July, 1887. Therein I rested much on the teaching of Cardinal Newman, which gave me to understand that Catholics were "free only to hold as 'inspired,' in some undefined sense of that word, certain portions or passages of the books set before them as canonical." I found great latitude of scriptural interpretation to be not uncommon amongst Catholics, both cleric and lay, and my efforts seemed to meet with approbation, notably from Pius IX. and afterwards, in a less degree, from Leo XIII.

All of a sudden, like a bolt from the blue, appeared, in 1893, that terrible encyclical about Scripture known as "Providentissimus Deus," containing the following unequivocal words:—

"It is absolutely wrong and forbidden, either to narrow inspiration to certain parts only of Holy Scripture, or to admit that the sacred writer has erred. For the system of those who, in order to rid themselves of these difficulties, do not hesitate to concede that Divine inspiration regards the things of faith and morals, and nothing beyond, because (as they wrongly think) in a

question of the truth or falsehood of a passage, we should consider not so much what God has said as the reason and purpose which He had in mind in saying it—this system cannot be tolerated. For all the books which the Church receives as sacred and canonical are written wholly and entirely, with all their parts, at the dictation of the Holy Ghost; and so far is it from being possible that any error can coexist with inspiration, that inspiration not only is essentially incompatible with error, but excludes and rejects it as absolutely and necessarily as it is impossible that God himself, the supreme truth, can utter that which is not true. This is the ancient and unchanging faith of the Church, solemnly defined in the Councils of Florence and of Trent, and finally confirmed and more expressly formulated by the Council of the Vatican. . . . Hence because the Holy Ghost employed men as His instruments, we cannot therefore say that it was these inspired instruments who, perchance, have fallen into error, and not the primary Author. For, by supernatural power, He so moved and impelled them to write—He was so present to them—that the things which He ordered, and those only, they, first, rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth. Otherwise it could not be said that He was the author of the entire Scripture. Such has always been the persuasion of the Fathers. . . . It follows that those who maintain that an error is possible in any genuine passage of the sacred writings, either pervert the Catholic notion of inspiration, or make God the author of such error."

It then seemed plain to me that my position was no longer tenable, but I had recourse to the most learned theologian I knew and my intimate friend. His representations, distinctions, and exhortations had great influence with me and more or less satisfied me for a time; but ultimately I came to the conclusion that Catholic doctrine and science were fatally at variance. This is now more clear to me than ever since my "ordinary" does not say whether my judgment about what the attribution of any document to God's authorship involves is, or is not right. To me it is plain that God's veracity and His incapability of deceit are primary truths without which revelation is impossible. The teaching then of Leo XIII., addressed dogmatically to the whole Church, comes to this:—Every statement made by a canonical writer must be true in the sense in which he put it forward—whether as an historical fact or a moral instruction.

Thus it is now evident that a vast and impassable abyss yawns between Catholic dogma and science, and no man with ordinary knowledge can henceforth join the communion of the Roman Catholic Church if he correctly understands what its principles and its teaching really are, unless they are radically changed.

For who could profess to believe the narrative about the tower of Babel, or that all species of animals came up to Adam to be named by him? Moreover, amongst the writings esteemed "canonical" by the Catholic Church are the book of Tobit and the second book of Maccabees, and also the story which relates how, when Daniel was thrown a second time into the lions' den, an angel seized Habbaeue, in Judea, by the hair of his head and carried him, with his bowl of pottage, to give it to Daniel for his dinner.

To ask a reasonable man to believe such puerile tales would be to insult him. Plainly the Councils of Florence, Trent, and the Vatican have fallen successively into greater and greater errors, and thus all rational trust in either Popes or Councils is at an end. Some persons may ask me, "Why did you not at once secede?" But your Eminence will agree with me that a man should not hastily abandon convictions, but rather

wait, seek the best advice, and, above all, Divine aid. It is also a duty of ordinary prudence for a man to carefully examine his conscience to see whether any fault (e.g., "pride" as you suggest) may not be at the root of his trouble and perplexity. Now I have myself maintained, and maintain, that a secret wish, an unconscious bias, may lead to the acceptance, or rejection, of beliefs of various kinds, and certainly of religious beliefs. But when the question is a purely intellectual one of the utmost simplicity, or like a proposition in Euclid, then I do not believe in the possibility of emotional deception. The falsehood of the historical narration about Babel is a certainty practically as great as that of the equality of the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle.

Still when, in two or three years, I had become fully convinced that orthodox Catholicism was untenable, I was extremely disinclined to secede. I was most reluctant to give pain to many dear Catholic friends, some of whom had been very kind to me. My family also was, and is, strongly Catholic, and my secession might inflict, not only great pain, but possibly social disadvantage on those nearest and dearest to me.

Why, then, I asked myself, should I not continue to conform, as advocated in my *Fortnightly Review* article? Why should I stultify my past career when approaching its end, and give myself labour and sorrow? It was a great temptation. Probably I should have remained silent had I not, by my writings, influenced many persons in favour of what I now felt to be erroneous and therefore inevitably more or less hurtful. To such persons I was a debtor. I also hated to disguise, even by reticence, what I held to be truth.

These considerations were brought to a climax last year by a grave and prolonged illness. I was told I should probably die. Could I go out of the world while still remaining silent? It was plain to me that I ought not, and as soon as I could (in August) I wrote my recently published articles. Therein I felt it would be useless to confine myself to that question which was for me at the root of the whole matter—namely, Scripture. Therefore, while taking care to use no uncertain language about the Bible, I made my articles as startling as I could in other respects, so as to compel attention to them, and elicit, if possible, an unequivocal pronouncement. In this I have, thank God, succeeded and the clause about Scripture I am required to sign is for me decisive.

I categorically refuse to sign the profession of faith. Nevertheless, as I said, I am attached to Catholicity as I understand it, and to that I adhere. If, then, my recent articles had been tolerated, especially my representations as to the probability of vast future changes through doctrinal evolution, I would have remained quiet in the hope that, little by little, I might successfully oppose points I had before mistakenly advocated. The *Quarterly* article of January, reviewed by me, and written, I suspect, by a Catholic, proceeds upon the very principle for which I am censured. I am not altogether surprised that your Eminence has shirked replying to my question, and referred me to Dr. Clarke, whose dishonesty (not, of course, conscious) and shuffling about Scripture so profoundly disgust me. It is to me truly shocking that religious teachers, cardinals and priests, profess to think certain beliefs to be necessary, and yet will not say what they truly are. They resemble quack doctors,

who play their long familiar tricks upon the vulgar, but act otherwise to those they cannot trifle with.

It has long been painful to me to think of the teaching given in Catholic schools and often proclaimed from the pulpit. There need be small surprise at the opposition existing in France to the authoritative teaching of fables, fairy tales, and puerile and pestilent superstitions.

Happily I can now speak with entire frankness as to all my convictions. *Liberavi animam meam*. I can sing my *Nunc dimittis* and calmly await the future.

In concluding I must revert to the apology, about which your Eminence seems as disposed to shuffle as about Scripture statements. If you have recently sold the *Tablet*, you have, of course, ceased to be responsible. If not, however you may disclaim it, responsible you are, as a Court of law would soon demonstrate under certain circumstances. I cannot but suspect the great reason for refusing to apologize is the desire to represent doctrinal agreement amongst Catholics to be much greater than in fact it is. When I spoke of exceptional opinions being held by "good Catholics," I did not mean to affirm they were theologically blameless, but simply that they were persons who looked upon themselves as Catholics while leading "good" lives in the ordinary sense of that word.

As to public opinion, it is plain the *Tablet* is not approved of, as to its treatment of me, by other Catholic journals, while I know that many of your Eminence's clergy, who have no sympathy with me, are much disgusted with it.

Considering how much less is implied by the imputation of folly to a man than by what has been said of me by your agents, I conclude by calling the attention of your Eminence to the words attributed to Christ by Matthew in his fifth chapter and 22nd verse.

Your most obedient servant,

ST. GEORGE MIVART.

Archbishop's House, Westminster, S.W., Jan. 25, 1900.

Dear Dr. Mivart,—In reply to your letter received last night, let me point out that you have not therein done justice to the Holy Father's Encyclical on Scripture nor perhaps to yourself. When you asked me for "spiritual help and enlightenment," I urged the importance of cultivating three virtues—humility, purity, and a spirit of prayer—virtues bearing, as it seemed to me, directly on your present state of mind. And for enlightenment I referred you to the most authoritative teaching of Leo XIII., as I would any person who came to me as a serious inquirer on the question of Holy Scripture. If you think that I "shirked" your request or "shuffled," as you say, you cannot have read the letter of the Holy Father *in extenso* or with care. In that letter the Pope says:—

"Rationalists deny that there is any such thing as revelation or inspiration, or Holy Scripture at all; they see, instead, only the forgeries and the falsehoods of men; they set down the Scripture narratives as stupid fables and lying stories; the miracles and the wonders of God's power are not what they are said to be, but the startling effects of natural law, or else mere tricks and myths. These detestable errors, whereby they think they destroy the truth of the Divine Books, are obtained on the world as the presumptuous pronouncements of a certain newly-invented 'free science'—a science, however, which is so far from final that they are perpetually modifying and supplementing it," &c.

Surely you will have been able yourself, knowing the real state of your own mind better than I can know it,

to say whether or not your catalogue of narratives described by you as "altogether false," "mere fiction devoid of any particle of truth," &c., is alluded to and condemned under the above extract.

But I have said that you have not done justice to the Holy Father's teaching by the quotation that you have made from his Encyclical. There are passages absolutely needed to complete his teaching in the very matter you bring under discussion. For instance, take the following :—

"There can never be any real discrepancy between the theologian and the physicist as long as each confines himself within his own limits, and both are careful, as St. Augustine warns us, 'not to make rash assertions, or to assert what is not known as known.' If dissensions should arise between them, here is the rule laid down by St. Augustine," &c. And so he goes on.

Again, "The sacred writers did not seek to penetrate the secrets of nature, but rather described and dealt with things in more or less figurative language, or in terms which were commonly used at the time, and which in many instances are in daily use at this day, even by the most eminent men of science. Ordinary speech primarily and properly describes what comes under the senses; and somewhat in the same way the sacred writers—as the angelic doctor also reminds us—'went by what sensibly appeared,' or put down what God, speaking to men, signified in the way 'men could understand and were accustomed to,' &c., with much more in the same strain of explanation; and the Holy Father adds that, 'the principles here laid down will apply to cognate sciences, and especially to history,' " &c.

These passages and others cannot be neglected without extreme levity by any one desiring to represent aright the direction given by Leo XIII. to students of the Bible.

And let me press upon you another consideration drawn from the same Encyclical :—

"As no one should be so presumptuous as to think that he understands the whole of the Scriptures, in which St. Augustine himself confessed that there was more that he did not know than that he knew, so, if he should come upon anything that seems incapable of solution, he must take to heart the cautious rule of the same holy doctor :—'It is better even to be oppressed by unknown but useful signs than to interpret them uselessly, and thus to throw off the yoke only to be caught in the trap of error.' "

Finally let me suggest that, besides a certain religious reverence due to the Word of God, a philosophic calm and measured language should be at least as characteristic of the teacher and student of Holy Writ as of the writer on any other serious science.

I must conclude this correspondence by assuring you that there is no personal sacrifice that I shall not at any time most gladly make if by so doing I can be of real use to you. I shall certainly not fail to pray that God's grace may prevail in the end, and that He may bring you back to the ark of salvation, to our great joy and consolation.

Believe me always your faithful and devoted servant,
HERBERT CARDINAL VAUGHAN.

January 27, 1900.

Dear Lord Cardinal,—Has I not felt sure our correspondence was at an end, I should not, of course, have sent it to be published. Should your Eminence wish it and *The Times* consent, your last and this reply shall be added.

Permit me, in replying to your kind letter of the 25th inst., to separate what is personal from what is doctrinal.

(1) As to the former, I am perfectly certain that your Eminence has meant, and means, most kindly to me, and, though I cannot but think you were precipitate in addressing your clergy so quickly, I am none the less sure it was done with regret and only from an imperative sense of duty. Nothing that has happened can obliterate the impression made on me by past kindness. I entertain a warm and sincere regard for your Eminence, and say, most cordially, "Ad multos annos!" I feel no less interest than I did in the progress of the new cathedral, and only wait to know its interior is free from scaffolding to visit it for a careful survey.

(2) As to doctrine, I have carefully read the whole of the Encyclical, and can find nothing which negatives the very plain and decisive affirmations quoted by me. But were it otherwise it would only include the Pope amongst the ecclesiastics who have so profoundly disgusted me by simultaneous assertions and denials: who try to play fast and loose with what they profess to regard as most sacred, saying that certain things must be believed, while yet they may be disbelieved; that it is necessary for salvation to hold with the fathers and doctors of the Church, and also that there is really no occasion so to do; that the decrees of Trent and the Vatican must absolutely be accepted as they were meant, and yet that they may be explained away.

The fact is that all Catholic teachers about Scripture are embarrassed by antecedent affirmations which you cannot disown, glad as you would be so to do. The Council of Trent naturally fell into error because then modern science was but in its infancy; while that of the Vatican was no less mistaken because the great majority of its Bishops neither knew nor cared anything about natural science.

But these truths you are not free to affirm because of the dogma of "infallibility," which clings to the Church like the fatal garment of Nessus, and will surely eat away its substance and reduce it to a mouldering, repulsive skeleton if that doctrine does not come to be explained away by dexterous Catholic theologians.

As to the old worn-out saying "There can be no discrepancy between science and religion," it is quite true if religion is always careful to change its teaching in obedience to science, but not otherwise.

As to "accommodations" and "Biblical modes of speaking," it is "true," or it is "not true" that the animals went up to Adam to be named, and so with respect to the story about Babel, &c.

Very many men and women are now anxious and distressed about their duty with regard to the Bible. What good end can be served by telling them it "contains no errors," while yet a multitude of its statements are altogether false?

By such a method the very foundations of religion become tainted with insincerity, untruth, and dishonesty.

Believe me, dear Lord Cardinal, yours, after all,
affectionately,

ST. GEORGE MIVART.

To his Eminence Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster, &c.











